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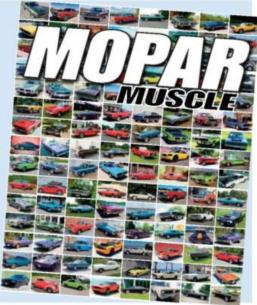




### **ON THE COVER**

Mopar Muscle readers really came through for our first-ever Readers' Rides Photo Contest sponsored by Auto Meter. We promised we'd print every Mopar that readers sent to us by the June 5 deadline, and we've done just that. To get everybody motivated, we asked the Auto Meter Custom Shop to donate \$800 in custom gauges to the photographer/ car owner of the winning set of photos. It must've worked because 122 of you responded. The coverage starts on p.34. Photography by Mopar Muscle readers.





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### TECH

### 4 OPTIMUM OVERDRIVE

We show how to fit a Magnum six-speed in an old Charger—and yes, it does involve cutting the original sheetmetal!

**20 RESTO CORNER WITH AMD: PANEL REHAB WITH ADHESIVES** Did you know you didn't need a welder to perform legit panel replacement? Here's how to do a solid job at home!

### <mark>4</mark> 122 READERS' RIDES!

The results are in for the First Mopar Muscle Photo Contest sponsored by Auto Meter. As promised, here's every Mopar readers sent us.

### **FEATURES**

### <mark>5</mark>5 objet d'art

Born a Slant-Six, Tracy Grooms' 572-cube big-block Dart is now a trophy-winning pump-gas street machine that runs 9s.

### <mark>52</mark> mega Hauler

Need to haul nine people up 10,000-foot peaks and hit 150 mph on the freeway? Then this is your car.



### **EVENT**

**26 MOPARS AT THE STRIP** Chryslers come to Las Vegas for the West Coast's most prestigious Mopar event each spring. Here are the 2015 highlights.

### **EPARTMENTS**

<mark>08</mark> bangin gears **MOPAR SCENE** 

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Indy 440-1 Kit Complete kit includes heads assembled with: 440-4 rocker assembly 1.5 or 1.6, 440-9K push rod kit, 440-33 complete

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CNC 906 port op 270cc intake port 75cc chambers

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426-1 Legend Kit

Head assembly, shaft clamp kit rocker side shims, manifold bolt kit, spark plug tubes, valve covers and bolts. rocker side springs, push rod kit, 426-2 or 3 manifold,

Indy roller rocker arms, removable valley plate, shaft of restrictors head studs, thick wall rocker shafts, tube O rings, complete gasket

On Sale... \$6,675

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500 Torque 4.060" bore 4.000" stroke 600 HP 550 Torque 4.185" bore 4.000" stroke R3 block

MA-X Cast Iron Heads

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Kits include heads assembled with 360-4 rocker assembly 1.5 or 1.6, 360-9K push rod kit, 360-14 rocker shafts, 360-11 rocker studs, 360-3 intake, 360-16 head bolts, head gaskets, intake and exhaust gaskets.

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Cast Iron Head Stock / W-2 exhaust Std 1.920 x 1.625" 5/16 stem valves

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Rotating kit... \$2,725

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Forged pistons, rings, bearings 10 to 1 compression

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Diamond forged pistons 10.75 to 1 with 175cc



Indy Maxx Aluminum Blocks For The 400B, 440 RB, 426

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### **BANGIN GEARS**

JOHNNY HUNKINS, EDITOR

## CARPOCALYPSE, OR CARNUCOPIA?

I don't want to scare you, but the Carpocalypse may be upon us. No, not the apocalypse as described in the Bible, but the one where cool cars disappear from the earth. You might think I've been huffing too much brake cleaner (yes, true), but the signs are everywhere. I remember about a quarter century ago when my parents' generation handed the kevs to the world to my generation. In point of fact, nobody handed the keys of anything important to me (I was on meds), but the actual smart people in my generation do run stuff, at least for a little while longer. Now we're signing the title of planet earth over to the new kids, and I'll quote the immortal words of Sheriff Buford T. Justice here: "Hold up on dat car wash gentlemen."

When I started this job 25 years ago, we'd hang out around the water cooler and tongue wag about cars—when we weren't actually running them hard on the street and testing at the track. That's all we did 24/7. The other day, I was eavesdropping on three newbies in the lunchroom. The oldest one wasn't a day over 23, and they all had every version of some video game going back a decade, and they were drilling into it hard, like programmer hard. They were so geeked, I thought they were gonna pee their pants. The backdrop is that we're sitting in an office with larger-thanlife murals of Jeff Lutz staging his 6-second '57 Chevy at Drag Week, and a vintage shot of a '62 Max Wedge launching hard at Indy. Iconic car magazines are laying everywhere. There's a gleaming tech center stuffed with hot cars and Eastwood tools. Huge flat-screen TVs festoon the walls and play 'round-the-clock video of Hellcats and Vipers. At their age, we never had that, but from the sound of lunch chatter, I wonder if those kids even know what this stuff is. Minus the fact that I'm a judgmental jerk, am I right? Are we leading horses to water, and they just aren't drinkin'?

While I was at the Carlisle Chrysler Nats last weekend, a guy told me a story that's starting to sound all too familiar. He said his son had graduated college and was still living at home. He didn't want to get a driver's license and had no interest in having a car. Too much hassle. This big baby still has his mom and dad driving

him everywhere—when he isn't playing video games and stealing music off the Internet. The man said he was finally tired of carting his grown son everywhere. He was so sick, I thought he was gonna yak. Thank God my kid got it right; she stole my wife's Hemi for a joyride when she was just 15. I believe the euphemism for that is "directionally correct."

Speaking of Carlisle, I ran into Jamie Passon, the Mopar transmission guy. We got on the topic of how stuff isn't made in America anymore, and more alarmingly, how a lot of old-world skills and manufacturing capabilities are evaporating from America and popping up in China. All Passon's transmissions are built 100 percent in the USA, and that sometimes means searching high and low for a guy or a machine to build a part that would've been easy 20 years ago. He walked over to a cardboard box and proudly pulled out a mainshaft with a helical speedometer gear cut into it. He waved it in front of my face: "you know how long it took me to find a machine that could cut this gear?!" I believe it would've been easier and cheaper to find a young programmer to hack the IRS mainframe.

Now enter the driverless car. This concept just gums up the gears in my head and makes my face go blank. You might as well explain a card trick to a chicken. My best guess is that there's a whole mess of people who view driving as a chore. Decades of cheap, boring imports will do that to a nation. The idea of a car being an appliance isn't a new one; my 1968 Plymouth Valiant started life as a lowly slant-six commuter. But there's a subtle difference: for every owner of such a car in 1968, there was a kernel of hope that they might one day own something nicer, then drive that nicer car somewhere just for the fun of it. And even '60s commuter boxes at least had some design flavor. The R&D guy with a driverless Google car—like most techies in the Bay Area—claims some imaginary moral high



In this picture, guess what thing is the rarest? It's not the '70 Challenger, or even the '71 'Cuda. It's the kids who are interested in them. We've got to do a better job weaning youngsters off iPhones and engaging them with real stuff. I vote for Mopars.

ground, and has made it his mission in life to rid the earth of real cars. The trickle will turn into a torrent before we know it.

It might take a few years, but I think the cool, imaginative kids in the class of tomorrow will win this one for us. It'll skip millennials and hit our grandkids. They'll wonder what happened to that show The Dukes Of Hazzard and the crazy orange car that jumps over rivers and has that weird emblem on the roof. They'll have questions about things like dial telephones, record players, paper money, AM radio, wrist watches, going to the moon, vacuum tubes, and muscle cars. It's all stuff you won't be able to experience anymore, it will be fascinating to them, and they will want it. At some point, it won't be enough to see it on YouTube; we will just have to show them.

And this month's Readers' Rides issue is surely a great place to start. First off, it's a real paper document that will outlast crashing servers, corrupt hard drives, root directory viruses, lost backups, and vaporous clouds. Second, it won't be subject to revisionist history, censoring, or some quirky search engine algorithm that puts it on page 23 of a Google search. And perhaps most telling, being that it's a snapshot of what guys really are collecting, driving, and restoring in 2015, it won't give future generations the false impression that Mopars are only shiny, mirror-smooth wing cars and Hemi 'Cudas. Yes, in 2015 there are also 1978 Plymouth Furys, 1980 Dodge Miradas, four-door slant-sixes, and disco-era Dusters. Hell yeah! Maybe it really isn't the Carpocalypse after all ... maybe it's a Carnucopia.

"The man said he was finally tired of carting his grown son everywhere. He was so sick, I thought he was gonna yak."

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## WIN THE HELL



## ARE YOU READY TO WIN THE ONLY DODGE CHALLENGER SRT HELLCAT X EXPERIMENTAL CONCEPT IN THE WORLD?

MOPAR Muscle readers, I have a fantastic story to tell you.

For the past six months, I worked closely with pre-eminent specialists in the automotive design, high-performance, and concept-car fields to re-create the Hellcat X.

Inspired by the U.S. Navy F6F Hellcat fighter plane that averaged a 19:1 kill ratio against enemy aircraft in World War II, I discovered that Grumman Aircraft Engineering first developed a turbocharged AND supercharged X-F6F Hellcat. You read that right—the first turbocharged AND supercharged Hellcat X was in 1942.

The more I learned about the heroic and fearless Hellcat pilots responsible for turning the tide of the war to America's advantage, the more I knew that I had to help the remaining pilots still with

us today. I contacted Honor Flight, an organization dedicated to seeing that these heroes are able to visit the memorials in Washington honoring their service. We arranged a grant to help fund its efforts and moved forward with the project.

Inspired by the legacy of the turbocharged AND supercharged prototype Hellcat X fighter, I contacted experts in forced-induction and asked them, "Is the world ready for a turbocharged AND supercharged Challenger Hellcat X?"

I was surprised by the answer that I heard. "The new Hellcat's powertrain control module is locked. There's no way to get into it, so this plan won't work! Absolutely no way."

I know one thing for certain. When America was faced with the challenge of bringing down enemy Zeros that threatened to attack The United States of America in WWII, the words: "It can't be done" were never spoken.

So I put together a team of Mopar experts and said, "Guys, we are going to re-create the Hellcat X, because it is a story of American might and exceptionalism that must be told. We'll debut it at the Chrysler Nationals at Carlisle in July 2015.

Some of you were there and saw the humungous crowds gathered around the awe-inspiring Hellcat X. Everybody wanted to know how the Hellcat X was built and when they could buy one.

Here's the thing. You can't buy it. You have to win it.

And when you win it, you're also going to score a fully restored 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T featured in a Challenger TV commercial—a true factory muscle car with a U-code 440 Magnum and a Hurst Pistol Grip fourspeed.

I've heard countless stories of folks like you and me who won a valuable

## "Is the world ready for a turbocharged AND supercharged Challenger Helicat X?"

NO PURCHASE, CONTRIBUTION, DONATION OR PAYMENT IS NECESSARY AND MAKING ONE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. 2015 Challenger Dream Giveaway's starts on July 1, 2015 and ends May 30, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. EST. This giveaway is open to residents of the U.S. and Canada (except Quebec) and other countries and U.S. territories and possessions only where offered and permitted by Jaw, age 18 and older. Void where prohibited. Odds of winning equal to one divided by the total number of tickets issued. This ad is for information purposes only, for entry and official rules including free entry method visit www.dreamgiveaway.com/dg/challenger/official-rules. The Sponsor, New Beginning Children's Homes, Inc., a 501(c)3 organization, PO Box 529 Centerton AR 72719, is a licensee of the Dream Giveaway' brand. "\$40,000 for TAXES applies to payment on behalf of winner for IRS withholding requirement, additional taxes may be owed. Prizes identified, logos, brands, and other trademarks referred to herein are the property of their respective trademark holders and FCA US ILC (formerly Chrysler Group ILC) is not a sponsor of this promotion.







### "Here's the thing. You can't buy it." You have to win it."

prize they could not accept because Uncle Sam requires a hefty tax payment. When you receive this prize, I'm doing something no other promotion in the world will do.

The grand prize includes \$40,000 toward the federal taxes so that you don't have to stay up at night worrying about not being able to accept this amazing pair of Dodge Challengers.

So here's the quick recap. Enter for a chance to win the only Challenger Hellcat X in the world and a matching 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T to go along with it and \$40,000 for taxes.

I have two videos online that you really will want to watch at **WintheMopars.com**. The first is "The History of the Hellcat X" and the second is the "Revolution Reborn" TV commercial. Again, you can win the exact 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T that stars in the commercial.

Your tax-deductible donation to the Sponsor Charity, New Beginning Children's Homes, also helps military charities like Honor Flight, DAV, and National Guard Education Foundation, and it helps Mothers Against Drunk Driving, too.

I am confident you have never had the opportunity to take home two one-of-a-kind Challengers of this magnitude, and get this, its never going to happen again.

Enter now with promo code **PA1215H2** and I will add **50% BONUS TICKETS** to increase your chances of winning. I look forward to handing over the keys to the only Hellcat X in the world, along with a fully restored classic Challenger R/T.

You've got to be in it to win it!

Mark Breiner Chief Gearhead





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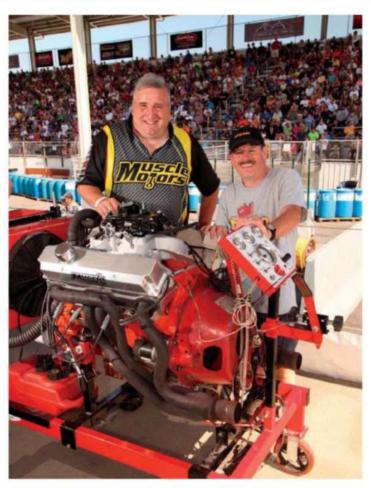
### **MOPAR SCENE**

BY JOHNNY HUNKINS

### CARLISLE GIVEAWAY MOTOR WINNER ANNOUNCED

We love giving away free stuff—in this case it's a 383ci low-deck wedge built by Muscle Motors using parts donated by Molnar (crankshaft and rods), Ross (pistons), QFT (carb), Milodon (lube system), and COMP Cams (valvetrain). We'll be bringing you all the deep technical details on this fantastic street engine very soon, but for now we'll tell you it made 558 hp and 611 lb-ft of torque on the Muscle Motors dyno. Retail value on the B-deck motor including parts, labor, dyno time, shipping cradle, and freight runs around \$12,400 from Muscle Motors (musclemotorsracing.com, 517-482-4900).

In a live drawing at the 2015 Carlisle Chrysler Nationals in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on July 10, Muscle Motors owner, Mike Ware (*left*) presented the lucky ticket holder Steven Alexander (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) with the stout little 383 on the Carlisle main stage in front of thousands of onlookers. Alexander seemed stunned but happy, and says the engine is destined for his B5 Blue '74 Plymouth 'Cuda, which currently has an anemic 300hp crate motor and 904 trans. We wish Steven good luck with his new 383. Our advice to him? Better start looking for a stronger trans!







### CATCHING UP WITH A PREVIOUS WINNER

Ever wonder what happens to our Muscle Motors giveaway engines after the grand drawing at the Chrysler Nationals? We found one of them in the car show field this past July 9 at the 2015 Carlisle Chrysler Nationals under the hood of Chris Ellis' 1988 Chrysler LeBaron. That's right—a LeBaron! This Muscle Motors giveaway engine was a 466hp 408ci small-block which Chris Ellis (Latrobe, Pennsylvania) won at the 2010 Carlisle Chrysler Nats. He dropped it into his '88 LeBaron convertible, converting the front-wheel drive to rear drive, adding an A500 four-speed automatic, and building a four-link rear to make it all work. Ellis kept the stock front suspension and even the stock 15-inch wheels. The convertible body style now has the grunt to match its good looks. Nice work, Chris, and thanks for showing us! Look for more highlights from the 2015 Carlisle Chrysler Nats (including the swap meet, car show, burnout contest, and Daisy Dukes bikini contest) right here at www. MoparMuscle.com.





### CHALLENGER GIVEAWAY CARS REVEALED

The Carlisle Chrysler Nationals was also the location where the 2015 Challenger Dream Giveaway was announced. From now until May 30, 2016, you can enter to win both of these dream machines, plus \$40K in cash to pay the taxes. Entry into the Dream Giveaway is free, but taxfree donations are being accepted to benefit the New Beginning Children's Homes, as well as for grants being provided to DAV, Honor Flight, MADD, and the National Guard Education Foundation.

The first car is a rare 1-of-916 triple-black 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T that was used in a 2012 Dodge TV commercial. Don't let the Hemi badges fool you though, it's actually a rare 375hp 440 Magnum bigblock with a four-speed (the Hemi badges were added by the TV production team). The other steed in the giveaway lineup is a new 2015 Dodge Hellcat—with a twist! Once you get past all the cool custom aero mods like the aluminum spoilers and cooling inlets, you'll find twin turbos feed the already potent supercharged and intercooled Hellcat engine. Inspired by the U.S. Navy F6F Hellcat fighter that served the armed forces in the Pacific during WWII, the Hellcat X puts out an astounding 805 hp. The general public can enter by simply calling toll-free 877-700-8946, or logging on to www. hellcatx.com

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TEXT BY ROB FISHER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT DOWDY

## DPTIMUM DVERDRIVE

WE SHOW HOW TO FIT A MAGNUM SIX-SPEED IN AN OLD CHARGER—AND YES, IT DOES INVOLVE CUTTING THE ORIGINAL SHEETMETAL

last we worked on our 1969 Dodge Charger (code name Project 50), we had completed an installation of Reilly Motorsports' Alterktion suspension. It was time to test-fit the engine and the transmission. Astute readers will recall that this project was going to feature late-model technology sheathed in one of the most iconic muscle cars of all time.

With the car in full roller trim, we had now come to the point of the project where we had to make a decision on who was going to be the shop of record to do huge amounts of bodywork, prep, and painting of our B-Body. It didn't take long to figure out who we wanted to do the work. Ken Mosier and his Danville, Indiana-based shop. The Finer Details. should be a name you're already familiar with, and if you're not, you need to be. Mosier has been in the collector car business for more than 20 years and has been operating his own restoration shop since 2002. His cars have won more awards than we can count and from our vantage point, the quality of his shop's work is second to none.

This Charger started out life as a 318 automatic car. When we got it there was

really not much left but the shell, a rottedout dashboard, and the big bulky A/C box. Since there was nothing overly rare about this car and we had neither original engine, trans, or most anything else for that matter, we took the opportunity to dial up the good folks at Roseville Moparts and order a brand-new Gen III 6.4 Hemi. That was followed by a call to American

Project 50, our 1969 Charger, sits in The Finer Details, the Danville, Indiana, restoration shop of Ken Mosier. Take a good look because this car isn't going to look like this much longer.

Powertrain to get our hands on a T56 Magnum six-speed. That's right, we were in essence putting a late-model Challenger drivetrain in our '69 Charger. There was, however, one small problem.

That small problem turned into a bit of major surgery. You see, a T56 Magnum is a fairly tall transmission while the trans tunnel on an automatic Charger of this era isn't very big at all. To fit that transmission in our Charger we were going to have to modify the tunnel, and there was no way around it. We mocked up the transmission and located it exactly where it needed to be. After marking general cutting areas with a Sharpie, we broke out the body saw and cutoff wheel and proceeded to cut. A nip here and a tuck there, and we were able to pull the tunnel apart far enough to get the transmission in the proper spot. Then we tack-welded a patch panel so the guys at The Finer Details knew where the shifter hole needed to be.

In the process of doing all of that we unfortunately had to cut out bracing that spans the car's width about 20 inches behind the firewall, which you can see in the images. Cutting bracing in any car is never something you want to do and that's especially true in a unibody car, but we had no choice. So in order to properly support the car we hijacked some .095 DOM tubing from an old oval-track race car project and welded supports front to back. These, coupled with the new extra-beefy crossmember from American Powertrain should more than make up for our brace-cutting expedition.

Now our plan in doing all of that was to save Ken and his team some time and



Before the car ever made it to The Finer Details, we did some preliminary cutting and locating so that we had an idea of how the whole thing was going to fit together.

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### **TECH | OPTIMUM OVERDRIVE**

headache of dealing with the drivetrain, but when he saw our handiwork we learned why they call the company The Finer *Details*. Ken said it would be best to just send the transmission and engine to him so that they could ensure that everything fit correctly when they were done. Hours of work could have been wasted if Ken's team didn't have a way to double-check fitment. It's somewhat like the old measure twice, cut once mantra.

They say that pictures are worth a thousand words, so we'll let the images of the process shine through.



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www.coolmymopar.com **877.741.8324**  Using a cutoff wheel, the old tunnel was shaped to accommodate the Tremec shifter. You can see just how far up the trans tunnel we had to slice in order to fit the very tall T56 Magnum six-speed.



Unfortunately, we had to cut the center brace out of the car, which you can partially see sitting behind the new and very beefy trans crossmember. The heft of the crossmember coupled with the some added bracing that you'll see later should be more than enough to keep the Charger nice and stiff.



We used a block of wood to get the driveline angle close to ideal so that we could order the correct trans mount. How the whole driveline would sit in this car would pose another problem with the firewall, but you'll get to see how we handled that at a later date.



**Energy Suspension sent two different** sizes of transmission mounts to ensure that we had options since our little project wasn't the most common swap.



We then tacked a sheet over the hole basically showing how we wanted the finished product to look. This was to be the road map for The Finer Details team.



With the preferred mount chosen, it down.



With the trans mount tightened down we could finalize the placement of the shifter hole, but first a strap was tack welded in place to help hold the floor pan in place. You can also see temporary bracing that we welded in to help keep everything square for the thousand-mile journey north.



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### **TECH** | OPTIMUM OVERDRIVE

Early on in this project we noticed a problem in a lot of the bracing on this car. Yes, we love Swiss cheese as much as the next guy, but not in this spot. This is the "before" shot.





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Here's the "after" photo. Scott Dowdy of The Finer Details got hold of our car and grafted a good frame rail into the place of our holey one. He literally sectioned out the bad and replaced it with the good. When it's painted we'll never be able to tell the difference.



To fit the T56 in place we unfortunately had to cut out the torsion bar crossmember that spans the car's width about 20 inches behind the firewall, which you can see here. In order to properly support the car, we hijacked some .095-DOM tubing and welded supports front to back. These, coupled with the new extra beefy crossmember from American Powertrain should more than make up for the cut. Dowdy then covered our rollbar tubing with frame connectors from U.S. Car Tool.



Dowdy ended up cutting out a large rectangle to give the tunnel more continuity front to back. Once complete it will be impossible to tell that the tunnel was ever modified. Here, you can make out the original shifter hole for the automatic trans and how Scott plated over the open hole that was left when we cut into the torsion bar crossmember.



Here you can see the trans tunnel has been smoothed, the metal worked, and the hole for the shifter cut. The next step is to test-fit the final product.



That's a brand-new drivetrain that normally can be found in a late-model SRT8 Challenger, but it's going into our Charger thanks in part to The Finer Details team who are getting ready to roll the engine and transmission into place as the car sits elevated on multiple jackstands.



The motor and trans sit in the very spot they will when the car is done. on the Reilly Motorsports K-frame. The only thing left to do is lower the car into place.



The painstaking work is rewarded with a perfect fit, exactly what you can expect from the guys at The Finer Details.

### SOURCES

AMERICAN POWERTRAIN

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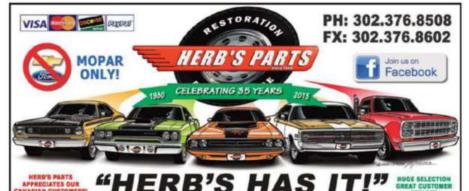
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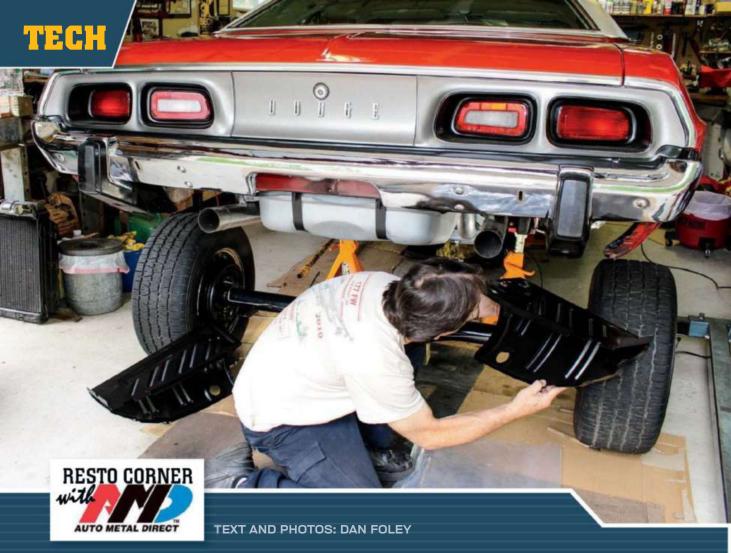
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## PANEL REHAB WITH ADHESIVES

DID YOU KNOW YOU DIDN'T NEED A WELDER TO PERFORM LEGIT PANEL REPLACEMENT? HERE'S HOW TO DO A SOLID JOB AT HOME!

We have the saying "rust

never sleeps," and when it comes to vintage Mopars the battle to keep our prized possessions from getting eaten by oxidation is never ending. Twenty and 30-plus years ago, to get rid of rust you needed to find NOS or used rust-free sheetmetal. Eventually the NOS supply pretty much ran dry, and if you found a solid piece, it became way too expensive for the average enthusiast. Finding rust-free donor

vehicles at salvage yards in northern states and across the rust belt has always been an issue. Even the supply of straight, rust-free sheetmetal from the Southwest has dried up for most popular models.

Fortunately, companies like Auto Metal Direct (AMD) and Eastwood have released products to help alleviate the rust issues that plague classic Mopar sheetmetal. For a Northeast vehicle, our '73 Challenger Rallye (aka The Slick Challenger) does not have a serious amount of rot—the only affected areas are in the lower part of

the trunk extension panels. That's mostly due to having spent most of its life in a garage, away from those salt-covered winter roads. Before the availability of reproduction trunk extension panels, we had seen many restored cars missing or having incorrect-looking extension panels. It's been one of our pet peeves. Helping cure this is AMD, which has released reproduction trunk extension panels that offer factory-fit and appearance.

Most enthusiasts don't have welding experience or the required welder and

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### **TECH** | PANEL REHAB WITH ADHESIVES

These left and right trunk floor extensions (PN 840-2570-L, 840-2570-R, \$129.99 each) from Auto Metal Direct will replace the rotted-out sections on our E-Body project. They feature a factory appearance and are a direct replacement made from high-quality steel with an EDP coating for rust protection. The bag of body plugs (PN F-BPK3, \$59.99) will fill in the body plug holes to keep out water, dirt, and noise.

Most enthusiasts don't have welding experience or the required welder and related tools. At the same time, structural adhesive technology has been used in body shops for nearly 20 years.







Here you can see the damage to the left-side lower extension panel. Ironically, the quarter-panels on each side weren't rotted out. It appears the car received new quarters when it was redone back in 1983. In those dark times the bottom of the trunk extension panels were filled with tar paper and undercoating! After we removed the tar paper the rusty panels received a coat of Eastwood Rust Encapsulator to stop the spread of oxidation.



We carefully cut out the rust without touching the outer panel that was less than a half-inch away. A die grinder with a cutting wheel did this tedious task, and it's not for the faint of heart. Our cut was an inch above the rust where the panel proved to be strong and solid to work with. The fender lip and bottom area of the quarter-panel only needed cleaning up with a wire wheel.



The new panel features that stock/original look you want when people take a peek under your pride and joy. We measured and cut an inch above the cutout area so the newly made patch panel would overlap for a strong bonding area for the panel adhesive.



After placing our patch panel in position, we were impressed how well the ribs and the lips lined up. Minor cutting and tweaking (bending) is necessary for perfect lineup. It takes time, patience, and a lot of planning to go into the job, especially if you're a novice like your author.

related tools. At the same time, structural adhesive technology has been used in body shops for nearly 20 years. We've had success gluing quarter-panels on a Challenger (Nov. '02) and front floorpans on a '66 Dart GT (May '07). The Challenger still looks great without any signs of cracking or separation and the same goes for the Dart. Other benefits to not welding include eliminating the possibility of tin corrosion at the panel joint and the prevention of possible heat warpage in the panels. Plus, without sparks there's less chance of fire in the home garage.

Sure, professional butt and spot welding can give that concourse-correct appearance, but we just wanted a nice-looking street driver that could be a local car show winner. Once the AMD trunk extension panels and Eastwood structural adhesive and restoration supplies were in hand (along with our arsenal of tools at home), we were eager to get to work. Keep a sharp eye on our how-to pix, because the Eastwood glue system can put competent body repair in the hands of the average do-it-yourselfer!



Many trial fitments with the clamps were performed until a routine was established with perfect panel position/alignment. We needed to be certain we could apply the adhesive and place the panel in position in time before the adhesive would set up. The panel adhesive will set up in only 20 minutes in our warm (80-90 degree) working conditions.



The panel edges were curled over just enough to meet flush when clamped together. After a few more mock-ups with the clamps we felt we were ready to begin the adhesive process.



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### **TECH** | PANEL REHAB WITH ADHESIVES

Proper prep work to the adjoining panel area is paramount. For the panel adhesive to hold the panels together (like being welded together), that surface area must be clean bare metal. We roughed it up with 80-grit sand-



paper, then cleaned it with Eastwood's PRE Painting Prep (PN 10041Z, \$9.99) sprayed onto a clean rag.



We've used Eastwood's Structural Panel Adhesive (PN 31087, \$19.99) for years with outstanding long-term success. Two Panel Adhesive kits were needed for each side. Eastwood's 26:1 Cartridge Gun (PN 46613, \$19.99) makes pulling the trigger easier than using a standard caulking gun.





Right after the panels got the glue, they were quickly aligned and clamped together before the adhesive setup. Notice the heavy bead (1/4 inch) of adhesive along the entire bare metal contact area for positive adhesion and rust protection. Also, the no-contact, inner areas were brush-coated with Eastwood's Rust Encapsulator (PN 16065ZP, \$39.99)



The clamps hold the panel in position while the adhesive hardens. The adhesive will hold the panel in place and seal-out rust for many years. The next day after full cure (24 hours) we removed the clamps.







Here's a "before" and "after" look of the repair on the right-side panel. The Eastwood undercoating blended nicely with the stock splatter. It was well worth all the work (eight days, three hours each day). Now the panels have that correctlook we wanted.



With a sanding block using 80-grit sandpaper, we blended-in the glued-on panel similar to sanding body filler, though the adhesive is harder to sand. Since this panel is hidden underneath the car, we didn't go crazy with the finishing work. We'll finish it off with Rust Encapsulator paint and undercoating, sufficient for our street driver.



We're proud of our first-time lower trunk extension panel work. We brushed on Rust Encapsulator treatment, making a good base for the Rust Encapsulator Rubberized Undercoating (PN 13651Z, \$22.99). It will blend well with the factory and/or dealer undercoating. The new body plug will be undercoated for that stock-like appearance.

### SOURCES

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f you live on the West Coast, you most likely take beautiful weather for granted all year round. That means it takes us spoiled Westerners something a little more spectacular to get us motivated, and if you're lucky enough to be of the Dodge, Plymouth, or Chrysler persuasion, you have that extra motivation in the form of the annual Mopars at the Strip. Each spring, Pentastars make the trek to the Strip at Las Vegas for a spectacular car show, drag race, autocross, and an awesome rock 'n' roll afterparty, which is sponsored by The Cannery Hotel and Casino. This year, all the action happened on March 27-29, 2015, in the wide open spaces of North Las Vegas, best known as being home to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway and Nellis Air Force Base. Mopars at the Strip is exactly the kind of spectacle Chrysler lovers expect from the town that knows how to entertain, and this year it PHOTO CREDIT: ELANA SCHERR didn't disappoint. We came across some real gems that we want to share with you, along with some of the other great activities we experienced. No Chevys or Fords allowed!



Everybody knows that getting to Vegas is half the fun of Mopars at the Strip, so we made a short hop over to Glendora Dodge to join a couple of Mopar Muscle readers for the four-hour drive north. Glendora Dodge also had a great display of performance products at their booth in the manufacturers' midway at MATS.



Saturday night, the three-time Grammynominated heavy metal band Queensryche played to Mopar fans at The Cannery Casino Hotel, the MATS host hotel. Anyone with a Saturday wristband from MATS got in free. And let's not forget the host hotel's Quarter Mile of Mopars display in the parking lot.



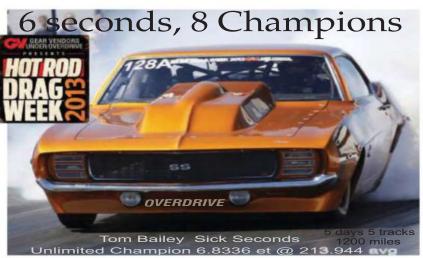


### **EVENT | MOPARS AT THE STRIP**

Hot Rod magazine staffer, Elana Scherr, brought out a brand-new '15 Dodge Charger Scat Pack, with the 485hp 392ci Gen III Hemi. She figured there was no better time and place to test it than MATS. Totally stock with the factory tires, Elana ran a 12.87/107 on her first try. That's wicked fast for a two-ton four-door with a factory warranty!









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Ralph Warnstrom's '70 Challenger is the perfect blend of old versus new. The sleek '70 convertible body is mated to a completely modern 6.1L Gen III Hemi paired to a six-speed TREMEC overdrive manual trans. Further modern enhancements come via Wilwood discs at all four corners. A Kenne-Bell supercharger kit bumps up the boost to throw down 700 hp to the rear wheels. Ralph attributes Superior Hot Rod Speed Shop in Butte, Montana, for the high-quality of work on his E-Body.



### 1965 DODGE A990 SUPER STOCKER

We can't figure out why in the world Brian Dickey wants to sell his immaculately prepared Dodge A990 Hemi tribute car, but as the owner/proprietor of Dickey's Hot Rods, we suspect he's probably angling for the cash to build his next project. We don't know how much it costs (if you have to ask, you probably can't afford it!), but it has a 528-inch Dale Reed-built Hemi making around 630 hp and 630 lb-ft of torque. The laser-straight body has been sprayed with PPG Viper Red, and power is delivered to the ground through a built A727 and Gear Vendors overdrive. If interested, Brian says call him at 949-275-8344!



After a hiatus, Dodge is finally back at MATS, and with a vengeance! The Dodge/SRT crew was taping segments for their YouTube page, interviewing late-model Hemi owners and showing off all the new SRT and Scat Pack iron out of Auburn Hills. Here, Dodge video host and Mopar Muscle contributor Steve "Magneto" Magnante interviews a Challenger T/A owner.



Those who stayed around for the awards ceremony on Sunday got to hang out with Courtney Hansen of Powerblock and Overhaulin' fame, and Dennis Pittsenbarger from Highway To Sell. We've never seen so many award plaques ever—there was a class for everything, and First through Third for each.



### 1978 PLYMOUTH VOLARE

Jeff Berkheimer of Haxtum, Colorado, is somewhat of an expert on the rare '78 Plymouth Volare and Dodge Aspen custom coupes (he admitted to owning at least three of them). Made in limited quantities of 1,000 cars (according to the Nov. '77 issue of Motor Trend), the Petty-inspired, Chrysler-sanctioned street stockers were endowed by Petty Racing with larger wheel openings, rear sway bars, stiffer springs, thicker Tuff steering wheel, racing decals, hoodpins, window blow-out straps, special paint (red for Dodge, blue for Plymouth), negative-offset 15x8 wheels, and aramid-belted white-letter radials. You could get one with a 318, or the uprated 360 as in Berkheimer's, but either was as rare as hen's teeth!



### 1968 DODGE CHARGER

The father-and-son team of DJ and Dominic Dhooge of Glendale, Arizona, built this pristine '68 Charger at home over a two-year period. The mostly stock resto gives way to some light mods where they make sense (mild 280 cam, Edelbrock RPM intake, lowering springs, quick-ratio steering box, and 18-inch Foose wheels), but the whole point was to build it at home together, then enjoy it out on the road. They succeeded in spades!



### **EVENT | MOPARS AT THE STRIP**



### 1970 PLYMOUTH DUSTER

All we know about Russ Schoen's '70 Duster is what we could figure out from looking at it. First, it's got a '69 Plymouth Valiant grille, which gives it a really cool non-stock look. Second, it's got a satin-black—powdercoated 6-71 blower sticking through the hood, which is attached to a 415ci small-block. The window card says it also has Magnum Force suspension and a TREMEC five-speed. (Of course, we dig the wheel and tire selection, but the front Ğasser-style wheels really need to have the same as-cast satin look like the rear rollers to properly sell it.) We would've loved to stick around for a second hour, but we risked not shooting pictures of anything else. Guysif you've got a cool car and you're at a national event, you might want to check your car once in a while!



### 1969 DODGE SUPER BEE

Knowledgeable West Coast guys who can afford the very best restoration and restomod craftsmanship in the Mopar world will at the very least have to consider the services of Restorations By Rob, located in Buckeye, Arizona. Car owner Joe Biro knows quality when he sees it, so having shop owner Rob Lelakowski handle his prized '69 Super Bee was a no-brainer. The glass-smooth Green FE5 four-speed Bee is home to a 496 stroker that looks like a mild 383, right down to its stock-looking ported 906 heads. This is one sweet wolf in sheep's clothing.



### 1969 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER

We're familiar with the fine body and paintwork that comes out of the Kool Kars LA shop in Torrance, California, and this '69 Chrysler New Yorker, owned by Billy Smith, is a wonderful example of what they can do. A really long dreadnought like a New Yorker tests the

skills of the metalsmith, and the glass-smooth sides of the big Chrysler looked like a mirror. The almost-stock TNT 440 propels the beast down the highway silently like a cross-country Amtrak.



### **1973 DODGE CHALLENGER**

Julie Rainwater is her name, and putting guys in their place is her game. We actually saw this '73 Challenger roll down the return road, and commented on how perfect the stance and wheel selection was on it, only to find out it was being driven by this gorgeous young lady. We're exploring doing a full feature on this street-legal 12-oh performer, but for now we can tell you its big-block wedge sounded healthy, and its cherry black paint looked a mile deep.



### 1964 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE

Richard Miner considers this Stage III Max Wedge '64 Plymouth Belvedere one of the family, and why not? He's had it for 40 years. It's a long-time family effort (he credits brother Joel equally) that has produced a competitive, well-oiled high-9-seconds e.t. machine. The Miner boys love the nostalgia racing circuit and do most of their "educatin" on the West Coast.



### **1978 DODGE MAGNUM**

If you have a Dodge Magnum and vou want to know how to make it look cool, pay attention to Ken Scharff's '78 Magnum here. For starters, these cars are not hugely collectible, yet they are intriguing, and not unpleasant to look at in stock form. NASCAR pilots liked them enough to race them back in the day, which makes them legit aero performers with a solid history. There's no reason to keep one stock, so use this blank canvas to paint your masterpiece on-Ken sure did! This modern take on the Pro Street theme has a mild 440, race-prepped A727, fourlink coilovers in the rear, Wilwood discs all around, and Billet Specialties big 'n' littles.



### 1969 DODGE DART

We're 98 percent certain that this '69 Dart running under the Glendora Dodge banner is the small-block A-Body belonging to Rod McGregor, who was a contender in our MATS True Street Challenge way back in 2007 (he finished in Third Place). Back then, it ran high 10s, but it was deep into the 9s for MATS 2015. It's good to see guys hanging on to their rides and improving them over time. The spectacular wheelie doesn't hurt either.

### **SOURCES**

CANNERY CASINO HOTEL WWW.CANNERYCASINO.COM

MOPARS AT THE STRIP WWW.MATSLV.COM

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# THE RESULTS ARE IN FOR THE FIRST MOPAR MUSCLE PHOTO CONTEST SPONSORED BY AUTO METER. AS PROMISED, HERE'S EVERY MOPAR READERS

### BY JOHNNY HUNKINS PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOPAR MUSCLE READERS!

ot every car has what it takes to get a full feature in Mopar Muscle magazine. It's not fair, but that's just a pragmatic reality. But what if we threw sanity and practicality out the window and once a year let everybody get in? That's exactly what we're doing this month, as promised on our website way back in February of this year. Technically, that means anybody who took the time to snap some pictures, fill out a short tech form, write a short one-page story, and mail it to our Irvine, California, headquarters got in this month. Except for the time readers spent following the directions

SENT US.

in the contest instructions, the opportunity was free of charge. To up the stakes, we also got Auto Meter's Custom Shop to sponsor our photo contest by donating \$800 worth of custom gauges for the winner with the coolest photos. Missed your chance? Don't worry. We'll be doing it again next year if the earth's crust doesn't split open and swallow *Mopar Muscle* headquarters whole.

### **THE NUMBERS**

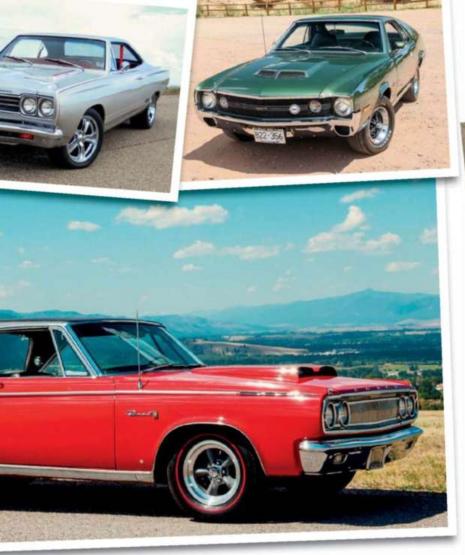
The response to the contest was fabulous and gave us some great insight into the readership of *Mopar Muscle*. By category, our 122 entries break down like this:

B-Body: 61 (50 percent), A-Body: 30 (24 percent), E-Body: 16 (13 percent), LX platform: 8 (7 percent), Pre-1962: 3 (2 percent), AMC: 1 (<1 percent), J-Body: 1 (<1 percent), front-wheel drive: 1 (<1 percent), F-Body: 1 (<1 percent), C-Body: O. And while it's easy to think this is an actual representation of readers, in fact, it's more a measure of readers who are the most engaged in the hobby. Example: We're guite sure that the percentage of readers with C-Bodies is greater than zero, it just wasn't important enough for anybody with a '69 Chrysler Newport to jailbreak the nursing home and take a picture. (Yes, that's us shaming you into action for next year!) Likewise, we're positive that more than 7 percent of you have LX platform cars, but being your daily drivers they apparently aren't that worthy compared to the '69 Road Runner in your garage.









### **THE PHOTOS**

All of the photos here were taken by the car owners—not by professionals. That said, there were some incredible pictures in our inaugural photo contest. Some were so good that with just a few minor tweaks they could've passed for pro. Judging the top photos was a difficult job since the results were so close. In the end we had to split hairs on a few technicalities. Lighting, composition (eye), the use (or non-use) of a polarizing filter, location/ background, and time of day all were considered. The type of car, however, was not a criterion. In the end, we selected a photo taken by Tony Lucas (46) of Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada.

Tony's shot from an elevated vantage point really showed off the sexy lines of his 1970 AMX. A polarizing filter

accentuated his Glen Green metallic paint and reduced unwanted sky and sun reflections in the paint and windshield (a huge check in the plus column). Likewise, shooting at the end of the day with long shadows took advantage of some sweet golden-hour lighting. There were no weird things growing out of or intersecting with his car like sign posts, poles, the horizon, or trees, and he took the time to pose the wheels as instructed. Tony also threw in some equally well-thought-out interior and engine shots to supplement his excellent exterior images. Tony's attention to detail will be rewarded with a package of Auto Meter Gauges from the Custom Shop valued at \$800. Congratulations to Tony, and thanks to everyone who participated in this year's contest!

## CUSTOM SHOP GAUGES



When your Auto Meter Custom Shop gauges show up, they'll come in a custom wood presentation box with a heat-burnished label. Custom colors for faces and needles are hand-painted, all gauges are hand-assembled, and everything is made in the USA.

This year's photo contest winner, Tony Lucas of Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, has won a package of Auto Meter custom gauges valued at \$800. Any set of Auto Meter gauges would be a killer prize, but the Auto Meter Custom Shop goes the extra step by hand-building each gauge to the owner's design specs for a oneof-a-kind creation. We can't wait to see what he specs out for his '70 AMX!

Until recently, only the most lavishly equipped machines on the show car circuit had one-off instrumentation. Then Auto Meter came up with a great idea: set up a custom shop for gauges so that anybody could get exactly what they want. The Auto Meter Custom Shop lets customers design their own gauges with unique color faces, ticking, pointers, cover glass, fonts, bezels, and lighting. If it's part of a gauge, the Auto Meter Custom Shop can do it for you. After logging on to the Auto Meter Custom Shop

website, you download the Custom Shop configurator, and start picking out your gauges with all their features. As you build your dream gauge package, the gauges take shape right on the screen. You can try out several different designs, save them for future reference, or compare them. You can even print them out and try them in your car before ordering. And all while you're them in your care before ordering. And an white you rebuilding your virtual gauges, the cost is updated and displayed with every revision. You'll also be quite surprised how affordable it is—when compared to a standard set of catalog gauges, it's only a few extra bucks. Once you order them, they'll show up at your door in a beautiful handcrafted wood box. They'll look so nice, you won't even want to put them in your car!

**SOURCE:** AUTO METER CUSTOM SHOP 866-248-6357 WWW.AMPCUSTOMSHOP.COM









## <mark>1970 AMC AMX</mark> TONY LUCAS ABBOTSFORD, BC, CANADA

Ever since Tony Lucas bought his first car—an AMC Spirit—he's wanted one of AMC's famed AMXs. In 2002, he found this example in Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia, (originally a California car) and set out to restore it to its former glory. In the process, Tony did extensive research on the highly optioned 360 car, and even tracked down the original owner to get some significant background on the project, which he took on as a multi-year restoration at home. We'll let Tony tell the rest of the story:

"As a career firefighter, I am fairly mechanically inclined but I had never taken a car apart before so the project stayed dry in my garage until I had done my research and saved some money. Teardown started in July of 2007, accompanied by lots of pictures and late nights with a factory AMC service manual and online forums. The car was completely disassembled in my home garage and then the bare unibody was sent to the media stripper and then to the body shop. 360 Fabrication, one of Canada's top restoration shops handled the body and paintwork. Coated in the factory Glen Green Metallic the arrow-straight panels look spectacular in the sun.

"While the car was at the body shop, the powertrain and components became the focus at home. I had become friends with Glenn, the previous owner who has an extensive knowledge of AMC engines. He helped disassemble the engine and deliver all the parts to the machine shop. When ready, all the components were taken to his house to be assembled. Glenn showed me step by step how to build the engine and why things are done a certain way. The engine is a very basic build of the original 360 V-8, consisting of the original cast-iron heads, crank and rods, cast pistons,

Edelbrock Performer intake, COMP Cams 268H cam and lifters, reworked converter, Pertronix ignition, Holley 675 Street Avenger carb, and 1971 free-flow exhaust manifolds exiting through dual 2 1/2-inch pipes with an H-pipe

'Every piece on the car was completely rebuilt and detailed. Every nut and bolt was restored, cleaned, and detailed in my garage

prior to assembly. It was an amazing experience researching parts, tracking down the rare pieces, and trying to put the puzzle back together. After four long years, she was completed and has since been taken to numerous shows. The detail work has been rewarded with numerous First Place awards at local, regional, and national shows along with invites and awards at concourse shows. Not bad for a car that gets driven. In fact, it even goes to the quarter-mile track a few times a year! So far its best is a 14.3 at 96 mph with the 2.87 ratio rear. (Since then I have installed a 3.31 ratio.)

"In 2014, I took the car on an epic AMC adventure: three all-AMC shows on three consecutive weekends covering over 6,700 miles! I left Vancouver, British Columbia, for Kenosha, Wisconsin, (where the AMX was made) for "homecoming." This is a multi-day all-AMC event that includes cruise-ins, drag racing, a swap meet, and the main event with almost 700 AMCs on the show field. My AMX was awarded one of only a few awards handed out all week with a Best of Cruise award. Next I headed south to Charleston, South Carolina, for the AMO Nationals. My AMX won Gold, scoring 193 out of a possible 200 points! Next, I was off to Portland, Oregon, for the Annual Rendezvous AMC Show where my car won First Place honors. I would say that was a pretty successful trip!"

## and MagnaFlow mufflers.

ENGINE: AMC 360 Cylinder Heads: AMC, cast-iron INDUCTION: Edelbrock Performer intake, Holley Street Avenger carb CAMSHAFT: COMP Cams 268H hydraulic
TRANSMISSION: BorgWarner
M11B three-speed automatic
REAREND: AMC 20, 3.31 gears SUSPENSION: stock, restored BRAKES: factory discs (front) and drums (rear)









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## 1972 DODGE DART SWINGER BRAD PFEFFER, PEORIA, AZ Ever since Brad Pfeffer was 14, he wanted a fast and light A-Body driver

like his neighbor's down the street. The impressionable teen finally got his wish three decades later when he answered an ad in the local paper for the '72 Dodge Dart you see here. It was far from its finished form, and, in fact, it took Pfeffer five years to complete the transformation in his garage. The big-block swap was a "must-have" for Pfeffer, requiring lots of fabrication and some swap help from the experts at Schumacher Creative Services. Pfeffer also performed all his own rust repair, mini-tubs, firewall work, and a complete body and paintjob at home, with some advice from his neighbor, a pro body and paint guy. The finished product is exactly what Pfeffer wanted: a fast, indestructible, stunning, weekend warrior that he built at home with his own hands.

ENGINE: Chrysler 440 Wedge
CYLINDER HEADS: production cast-iron "452" castings
INJUCTION: Edelbrock Performer intake, Holley 750 carb
CAMSHAFT: Mopar Performance hydraulic,
284 degrees duration, .484-inch lift
TRANSMISSION: 727 TorqueFlite three-speed automatic
REAREND: 8,75-inch, 3,71 gears with Auburn diff
SUSPENSION: stock, 2-inch lowering blocks
BRAKES: 5x4.5-inch conversion with discs up front, drums in rear





## 1973 PLYMOUTH DUSTER SCOTT BODEN, GOESSEL, KS

Nobody knows the long, hard road to project completion better than Scott Boden. His '73 Duster was a wrecked hand-me-down from his brother Shane that he bought for \$500. That was in 2001. Before he could make his dream car, however, he had to first make his family. Five children and a career as a science teacher later, Scott finally began digging in to the derelict sitting in the family barn. The learning curve Scott rode was extra steep because not only did he tackle all his own body, fabrication, and paintwork, he also handled the mechanical and electrical details of swapping a Gen III Hemi and five-speed automatic from a late-model Ram truck. This included fabricating a significantly wider custom trans tunnel to fit the truck's 545RFE. So while we are in awe of Scott's wonderful attention to photographic detail, we are even more blown away by his car crafting chops!

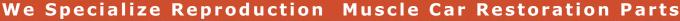
ENGINE: 5.7L Gen III Hemi

CYLINDER HEADS: stock Gen III Hemi

CRUMEN AFT Stock Gen III Hemi
CAMSHAFT: stock Gen III Hemi
TRANSMISSION: 545RFE five-speed automatic
REAREND: 8.75-inch rear with 3.23 gears
SUSPENSION: Just Suspension, Mancini,
and Hellwig upgrades

BRAKES: stock discs (front), stock drums (rear)









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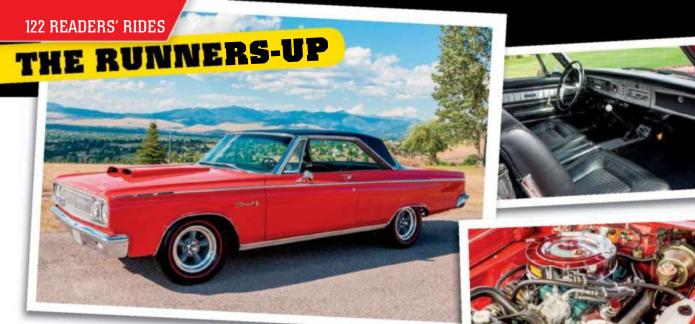




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1965 DODGE CORONET 500 PAMELA PARRISH, MISSOULA, MT

In the dictionary under the definition of "dedicated wife" is a picture of Pamela Parrish, who lavished a ton of time photographing her husband's 1965 Dodge Coronet 500. The car is a nearly identical re-creation of a car her husband Chad bought new on October 26, 1965, which was a rare 1-of-729 426 Wedge four-speed Coronets that year. The original 426 Street Wedge four-speed car is long gone, now an SS/JA drag car owned by racer John Winslow. Winslow did, however, offer up a few pieces from the original to help Chad and Pamela convert their candidate 361ci/automatic donor car to something like the original incarnation. ("Every time he grabs the Hurst shifter, he remembers that it's the exact same knob he grabbed 50 years ago," writes Pamela.) This Montana-based Mopar gets a lot of wheel time while getting driven to events all over the West Coast, a task made far more bearable with a non-original aftermarket air conditioning system.

INE: 440 Wedge (451 ci)

\*\*MPRESSION RATIO: 10:1

COMPRESSION ARIOS 10:1
CYLINDER HEADS: 906 castings
INDUCTION: stock intake with 750-cfm carb
CAMSHAFT: 220/230 duration hydraulic
TRANSMISSION: A833 four-speed manual
REAREND: 8.75-inch with 2.76 gears

SUSPENSION: stock Brakes: stock drums





Chris Gard's '69 Charger has been in the family since before he even had a family. As a student at Oklahoma State University back in 1986, Chris began looking for a cool car in the local Sunday classifieds (remember those?!) and came across this Charger for sale. His initial offer to buy the car was declined, but two weeks later he got a call from the seller saying "game on!" The fun came to a halt when Chris pushed the car a little too hard on the street and damaged the engine. It was downhill from there, but when Chris got married, his wife, Cathy, never forgot that the classic B-Body was resting quietly in the garage. Even while raising a family, Chris' woman would remind him not to sell the car for any short-term gain, but to keep it for the day he could enjoy it again. That day finally came in 2012 when Cathy insisted they get the Charger professionally restored. They unanimously agreed that Scotlea Hot Rods was the right place to go and pulled the trigger on the rehabilitation you see here!



ENGINE: 383 low-deck Wedge
CYLINDER HEADS: 440 Source Stealth aluminum
INDUCTION: Weiand intake with FAST EFI
CAMSHAFT: stock

TRANSMISSION: TorqueFlite three-speed automatic REAREND: 8.75-inch with 3.55 gears SUSPENSION: stock

BRAKES: Right Stuff disc conversion (front and rear)



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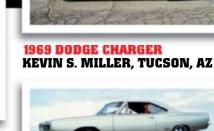
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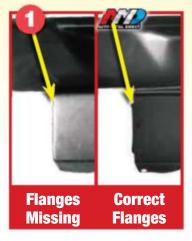


1970 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T SAL MORAN, WOODBURY, MN



**1964 PLYMOUTH VALIANT CHARLOTTE PALMER HERON, MT** 















122 READERS' RIDES



1962 DODGE POLARA 500 DAVE LOUGHNER GREENSBURG, PA



1971 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER BRUCE A. DRANE, STOCKTON, IL



<mark>1933 DODGE SPORT COUPE</mark> JOHN WOODS, PHILOMATH, OR



2004 DODGE SRT4 TERRY FROST, GALLATIN, TN



1974 PLYMOUTH DUSTER STEVE DARTT WILLIAMSBURG, VA



1969 440 DODGE CORONET GARY LAZETTE, ROSE CITY, MI



1970 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER JAMES HARWOOD WEST HAVEN. CT



1970 PLYMOUTH DUSTER BARRY N. GILMAN BRIDGTON, ME



1968 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER DALE E. BURNETT, LEBANON, OH



1970 DODGE CHALLENGER T/A MARK ZELIADT, NORWALK, IA



2009 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T MARK D. POLACEK, PEOTONE, IL



1967 DODGE CHARGER HENRY ENGELHART, NOKOMIS, IL

FAMILY TWOFER! •



1972 DODGE CHARGER RALLYE DENNIS FLINCHUM STATESVILLE, NC



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**1980 DODGE MIRADA COUPE** KEVIN BOLLINGER, LEBANON, PA



1970 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA RALPH LOPEZ, OCALA, FL

FAMILY TWOFER!



**1974 PLYMOUTH DUSTER MATTHEW SCHULTZ** ST. CHARLES, MI



**1968 DODGE CHARGER** SANDOR ROBERTS, ALTO, TX



**1971 DODGE CHALLENGER PEG ERGER** INDEPENDENCE, IA



**1969 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER MIKE SCHMITZ** SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI



**1968 DODGE CHARGER CHRIS NUESELL** STATEN ISLAND, NY



1970 PLYMOUTH 'CUDA **GARRY ERGER** INDEPENDENCE. IA



**1968 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA BOB COMSTOCK EL DORADO HILLS. CA** 



1973 PLYMOUTH 'CUDA **BARRY BATES** MARTINSBURG, WV

**JOHN APBLETT** 

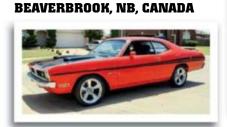


1966 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE II **JOHN STAYT** 

SCHNECKSVILLE, PA



1974 PLYMOUTH SATELLITE **SEBRING PLUS JOSEPH CASSIERE** MONROE, LA



**1972 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER** 

**1971 DODGE DEMON** JOE MOSES, GRAND PRAIRIE, TX



1968 DODGE CORONET R/T **TERRY REAMS** PARKERSBURG, IA



**1973 PLYMOUTH SATELLITE SEBRING PLUS JOSEPH CASSIERE** MONROE, LA





## 122 READERS' RIDES



1971 DODGE DEMON JOSEPH YOHE, EXPORT, PA



1974 DODGE CHARGER PETE SRNIK JR. NEW PORT RICHEY, FL



1970 PLYMOUTH AAR 'CUDA JEFF OGDEN, TUSCOLA, IL



1966 DODGE CHARGER BOB MERDAN, ST. JOSEPH, MN





1966 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA BILL WITT, BRANDON, FL



1967 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA GIL STAILING, PLAINFIELD, CT



2006 DODGE CHARGER R/T ROBERT SORRELS, CUSHING, OK



1968 DODGE DART GTS SAM PRAHL, NEW LONDON, WI



1970 DODGE CHALLENGER T/A MIKE SANCHEZ, AFTON, WY



1970 DODGE SUPER BEE GREG DISABATINO SOMERS POINT, NJ



1956 PLYMOUTH SAVOY BUTCH SAMPLE, LOUISVILLE, KY



1969 PLYMOUTH VALIANT CLIFF SALINAS, NAMPA, ID



1970 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER MATT MILEWSKI CRANFORD, NJ



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1974 PLYMOUTH DUSTER JEFF BROWN, WHIPPLE, OH



1971 DODGE CHARGER SE RONALD BROWN, MARIETTA, OH



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1969 DODGE CHARGER JEFF SWIFT, FAIRLEE, VT





1970 DODGE SUPER BEE RANDY ROHDE, LAVERNIA, TX



1970 PLYMOUTH AAR 'CUDA RALPH LOPEZ, OCALA, FL



1968 DODGE CORONET 440 ERIC GEBERT LIBERTY TOWNSHIP, OH



2009 DODGE CHARGER R/T COLIN COUTTS LETHBRIDGE, AB, CANADA



1972 PLYMOUTH SATELLITE SEBRING PLUS GARY O'BRIEN INDEPENDENCE, IA



1969 DODGE SUPER BEE DALE ORWICK, ROSEBURG, OR



1968 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA BILL ELDER, MARIETTA, GA



1967 PLYMOUTH GTX DANIEL STURZEN TOWANDA, PA



1970 DODGE DART SWINGER PAUL HUBERT, LOWELL, MA



1969 PLYMOUTH GTX DONN MARTIN, AURORA, CO



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1969 DODGE DART GTS KENNETH R. HERPEL MEBANE, NC



1962 PLYMOUTH SAVOY ELDON COCKLIN BURLINGTON, ON, CANADA



1972 PLYMOUTH SATELLITE SEBRING PLUS RICHARD PAUL, ANN ARBOR, MI



1967 DODGE CORONET R/T CLIFF REED, WEST BLOCTON, AL



1972 DODGE CHARGER RALLYE RYAN BJORKLUND DETROIT LAKES, MN



1970 DODGE DART SWINGER LARRY REED, BESSEMER, AL



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1969 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER TOM BARBARITO CAMPBELL, CA



1972 DODGE CHALLENGER RALLYE BILL GABOR BOYNTON BEACH. FL



1972 PLYMOUTH DUSTER SCHAD RICHEA CALGARY, AB, CANADA



1970 PLYMOUTH GTX MICHAEL REZABEK LANCASTER, CA



1971 PLYMOUTH DUSTER CHUCK SMITH GRAND PRAIRIE, TX



2012 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T JERAMIAH WESTON HICKORY, NC

**FAMILY TWOFER!** 



1974 DODGE DART SPORT DUANE SPATH, MILWAUKEE, WI



1967 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA DUANE SPATH, MILWAUKEE, WI



1966 DODGE CORONET 500 HAROLD PRENTICE MILLBROOK, ON, CANADA



1968 PLYMOUTH BARRACUDA LESTER "BUD" LAWLEY HUEYTOWN, AL



1964 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE RON BORDEN, ONTARIO, CA

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1969 DODGE SUPER BEE DEON ELLIS NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FL



1967 DODGE DART BRIAN METZ, FERDINAND, IN



1972 DODGE CHALLENGER LAMOINE DOHMS EAU CLAIRE, WI



1968 PLYMOUTH VALIANT JEAN-PAUL BROUILLETTE AUBURN, MA



2008 DODGE CHALLENGER SRT8 JOE SEOANE, SLIDELL, LA



1970 DODGE CORONET 440 JAMES HANEMAAYER KITCHENER, ON, CANADA



2014 DODGE SRT8 CORE DAVE HALEY, AURORA, CO



1963 PLYMOUTH FURY WAGON KATHY WILLIAMS, CANTON, OH



1978 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER BOB SCHMIT, APPLETON, WI

**FAMILY TWOFER!** 



1968 PLYMOUTH VALIANT STEVE ROBERSON LITCHFIELD, CA



1968 PLYMOUTH VALIANT STEVE ROBERSON LITCHFIELD. CA



1970 DODGE DART SWINGER RON PIENIG SPRUCE GROVE AB, CANADA

**FAMILY TWOFER!** 



1966 DODGE CHARGER FRANKLIN JONES, MIAMI, FL



1967 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE II FRANKLIN JONES, MIAMI, FL



2013 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T JIM ERICKSON, LAS CRUCES, NM



1937 DODGE D-5 COUPE HENRY MCCURDY MILLINGTON. TN



1965 PLYMOUTH BELVEDERE PAUL KINZER, CLARKSVILLE, IN

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# BORN A SLANT-SIX, TRACY GROOMS' 572-CUBE BIG-BLOCK DART IS NOW A TROPHY-WINNING PUMP-GAS STREET MACHINE THAT RUNS 9s.

BY STEVE MAGNANTE 😯 PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MACHAQUIERO

ig-block Darts are the bad boys of the Mopar street and strip drag racing scene. No, they don't whiz around corners like Vipers but being as much as 500 pounds lighter than their larger B- and E-Body cousins (and that's

before serious weight slashing is initiated), the presence of a wide, orange 440 wedge between the Dart's fenderwells has been the stuff of straight-line legend for decades. And while the factory got hip to the big-block A-Body game from 1967 to 1969, their scarcity only served to trigger

do-it-yourself creations from coast to coast.

The VIN tag riveted to Tracy Grooms' sanitary green 1969 big-block Dart may not have a cool "H" or "M" punched into its fifth spot, identifying a factory-installed 383 (1,912 built) or 440 (640 built) Magnum big-block powerplant, but with an





aluminum 572-inch wedge sitting between the fenders, he's not worried in the least. The only digits the Arlington, Washington, resident is interested in are 9.42 and 137, as in the amount of time in seconds it takes to cover the standing quarter-mile and the peak mph through the traps.

Oh, there's one other number Tracy's fixated on. That's "92," the octane rating of the premium unleaded sloshing around inside the custom 20-gallon fuel cell inside the trunk. There will be no addictions to expensive race fuel in Grooms' garage. So what if the Dart's VIN tag has a C (225 Slant Six) in the fifth spot? Tracy—like so many hard-core Mopar racers before him—appreciates the performance potential of the big-block Dart, but with only 2,552 factory B and RB big-block Dart installations in 1969, there are not enough

to go around.

This is what's driven engine swappers to build their own ever since day one. Our research indicates that the first big-block/ A-Body heart transplant was performed by none other than founding Ramcharger member Dan Mancini in mid 1961. The subject was a new 1961 Plymouth Valiant into which Dan splashed a dyno room fresh 361 four-barrel (a brother to the 383 low-deck but with 0.125 smaller bores). Backed by a cast-iron 1957 Plymouth TorqueFlite (the new-for-'62 aluminumcase 727 wasn't available yet) and 1957 Plymouth Fury 8 3/4 rear axle, Mancini's street-driven Valiant preceded the 413 Max Wedge-powered Dragmaster "Golden Lancer" 1962 NHRA A/FX Lancer by several months.

A decade later, the big-block A-Body legacy got a shot in the arm when Chrysler drag racer and staff engineer Dave Koffel crammed a 440 Six Pack into a 1970 318 Duster for the "Detroit road races" happening on Woodward Avenue. What magnified Koffel's efforts was the resulting three-page photo essay showing the intricate how-to details that ran in the April 1971 issue of *Car Craft* magazine. Then-*CC* staffer and present *Elapsed Times* magazine Editor Ro McGonegal shared



Koffel's specific recipe and you can bet the resulting magazine coverage spurred multiple copycat efforts in reader land.

And so, ever since those first pistol shots were fired nearly a half a century ago, thousands of lowly Slant-Six Darts have been rejuvenated with big-block power for the kind of power-to-weight ratios owners of B- and E-Bodies have to spend more to get. Better still, big-block swappers of the last decade or so have access to more



OBJET D'ART

"...ever since those first pistol shots were fired nearly a half a century ago, thousands of lowly Slant-Six Darts have been rejuvenated with big-block power..."





Like many non-factory big-block Dart swaps, a flat motor plate sandwiched between the block and water pump simplifies engine location. Note the custom inner fenders and firewall, painted to match the body. The cowl vent and windshield wiper posts have been smoothed on this sunny-day-only streetster.

cubic inches than ever before, thanks to the ready availability of high-quality blocks and rotating assemblies from the aftermarket.

In the case of Tracy Grooms' somewhat stealthy '69 (only the Super Gas-style hoodscoop and slicks give it away when parked), no less than 572 ci have nested between the fenderwells. Think about it, that's 189 cubes more than a 383, and

132 cubes more than a 440. But thanks to the aluminum block, heads, and intake manifold, the nose weight is comparable to a stock 318. An avowed fan of all Detroit muscle, the 55-year-old trucker had to set his automotive hobby aside for a while to raise children—Taylor, Haley, Brady, and Jesse. But now that they're out of the nest, so to speak, memories of his '67 Chevelle and '69 Road Runner came flooding back.

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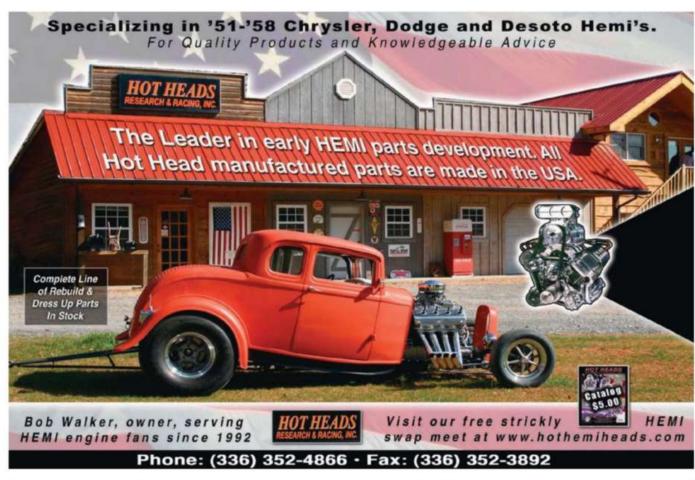
Having done right by his family for many years, the decision was made to score another muscle machine for old-time sake. As with his Bow Tie and Road Runner, fun was the watchword. The whole matching-numbers circus doesn't appeal to the practical Washingtonian so when he spied a 400 big-block powered '69 Dart in the classifieds, he jumped on it. Then coated in gray primer, the low-deck 400 big-block inhaled through a pair of Holley quads bolted to a tunnel ram—a classic big-block Dart street fighter configuration.

But despite mid 11-second timeslips, a chance matchup against an 18-year-old racer named Joey at the local dragstrip triggered the transformation we see today. Tracy's badass, tunnel-ram, big-block Dart ... lost. Tracey tells us: "The fact the opponent was so young really messed with my head. I wasn't a really happy person at that point." So a plan was hatched to come up with an unbeatable powerplant while still maintaining street capability.

Ironically, it was during a post-race powwow with the 18-year-old victor that led to Tracy's selection of engine builder Ed Trihey. "I asked the kid who built his engine and Ed's name came up. So I had him do mine too." At 3,010 pounds wet and ready to race, Trihey's insistence on the costly aluminum engine is largely responsible for the Dart's 49/51 static weight distribution. Unlike so many bigblock Darts of yore, which suffered from hefty cast-iron engine parts and lost much acceleration to tire spin, Tracy's 1.4-second 60-foot times deviate from tradition—in a good way.

Helping the cause is a total reworking of the stock torsion bar/leaf-spring suspension layout. As good as they were, replacing

The low stance masks the 0/100 (front/rear) dynamic weight distribution on the launch pad. That's another way of saying the car is doing a wheelie. Besides the fiberglass hood, the 3,010-pound Dart is all steel.





















A mix of stock and custom interior elements often surprises car show judges and attracts trophies. Tracy says he spent every summer weekend for five years transforming the primered street racer into this triple-threat street, show, and go masterpiece.



The compact A-Body engine bay and wedge's nearly horizontal exhaust port conspire to force use of fenderwell headers on big-block Darts. The tidy fabrication by Randy's Custom Exhaust preserves the ground clearance without rubbing the front tires, a classic big-block Dart hassle.

them with modern coilover spring/ shock assemblies at all four corners shed weight and brought a level of suspension tuning one could only dream about back in the '60s. And while your author is a diehard leafspring fanatic, I'll admit that a wellsorted four-link system can deliver better launches while eliminating the ugly 40-pound (each!) weight of a typical Super Stock leaf spring.

Living in a fairly rural part of Washington, Tracy says he's free to drive the Dart on the street without attracting much attention. He tells us: "I have been pulled over by the police twice, but each time it was so the curious officers could get a closer look

at the car." With its 20-gallon fuel cell and easily sated thirst for premium pump gas, it gets driven regularly when the weather is good. We thought we misheard Tracy when he said the 572 has already covered 10,000 miles since its completion in 2012 but it's true. He credits the Moroso vacuum pump for extending ring life and the massive custom radiator for engine-saving 180-degree cruising temperatures.

Though very active on the dragstrip—he's got over 50 9-second timeslips—Tracy is a regular on the Seattle-area car show scene as well. At the 2015 Mopars at the Strip event in Las Vegas (aka MATS), the sanitary Dart nabbed a Second Place trophy in the Modified/Competition class against several equally noteworthy machines. But it was at a small hometown car show in Arlington, Washington, where the Dart earned Tracy his most-prized trophy. Was it for Best in Show, Best Engine, or Best Chassis? Nope. Tracy's favorite trophy is engraved "Most Likely to Get a Ticket"! He says. "The car sounds like a freight train coming down the road and that trophy was something I'd been after for a few years and I finally got it." And so here's yet another bare-knuckle A-Body bruiser, upholding the legend of the big-block Dart.



1969 DODGE DART CAR OWNER: Tracy Grooms • Arlington, WA

TYPE: 572ci Chrysler RB-series big-block

**BORE & STROKE:** 4.500 x 4.500 inches

COMPRESSION RATIO: 11.5:1

BLOCK: World Products aluminum block, billet steel crossbolted main caps

ROTATING ASSEMBLY: Bullet 4340 billet steel crank and polished H-beam steel rods, Ross forged pistons

CYLINDER HEADS: fully ported Pro Comp T6-6061 CNC-finished cast aluminum wedge, 72cc chambers, 2.20-/1.81inch valves, bronze valveguides and hardened valve seats, COMP triple valvesprings, titanium retainers

CAMSHAFT: Bullet solid roller, 0.660-inch lift, 320 degrees duration (advertised)

VALVETRAIN: COMP 1.5 aluminum roller rockers, shaftmount, 0.26/0.26-inch lash, Pro Comp aluminum valve

INDUCTION: single Holley 1250-cfm Pro Dominator, K&N air filter Intake manifold B-1 single-plane aluminum highrise intake manifold, port matched to heads.

FUEL SYSTEM: Quick Fuel electric pump and filter, No. 10 main line to pressure regulator, No. 8 line to carburetor, 20-gallon aluminum fuel cell

OILING: Melling HV wet-sump, Milodon 9-quart rear-sump pan, Moroso vacuum pump

**EXHAUST:** 2 1/8-inch custom headers, 3-inch under-car system by Randy's Custom Exhaust

**IGNITION:** MSD crank trigger, Pro Billet distributor, 7AL with two-step, 8.5mm silicone wires

**COOLING:** custom brass/copper crossflow radiator by Ken's Radiator, Meziere electric pump, MP aluminum pump

**OUTPUT:** 760 hp at 6,800 rpm

BUILT BY: Ed Trihey, Mukilteo, WA

### DRIVETRAIN

TRANSMISSION: 1970 Chrysler 727 TorqueFlite with Cheetah reverse-pattern full-manual valvebody and transbrake built by Dan Wills at TRT Transmission, Be Cool fluid

TOROUE CONVERTER: Coan 10-inch. 4.500-rpm stall

SHIFTER: Turbo Action, gated shift pattern

**REAREND:** narrowed Art Morrison 9-inch with back brace, 3.90 Detroit Locker by Drivelines, NW

### CHASSIS

**CHASSIS:** custom tube frame, roll cage, wheeltubs, smooth firewall and floor pan merged into stock rockers by Ron Pircey's Custom Tin Works (Fife, WA), stock 111-inch wheelbase

FRONT SUSPENSION: Art Morrison coilover

**REAR SUSPENSION:** Art Morrison four-link with coilover

STEERING: Art Morrison rack-and-pinion, ididit steering column and wheel

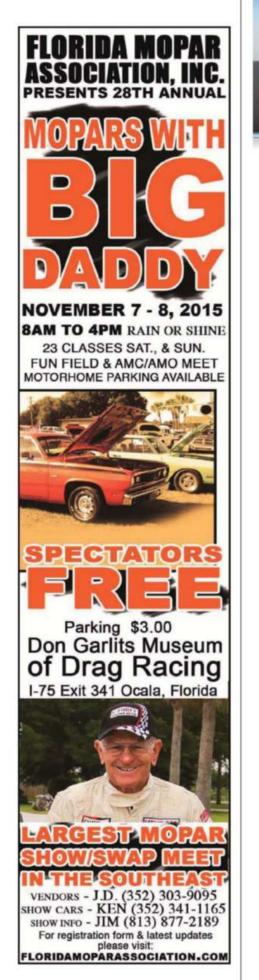
BRAKES: Wilwood four-wheel disc brakes, aluminum Mopar

CAR BUILT BY: body modifications, interior and dark green paint by Warrens Restoration (Arlington, WA)

## WHEELS & TIRES

WHEELS: 15x6 and 15x10 Weld Racing

TIRES: Hoosier 175/70D15 (front), Hoosier 31-15-16.5





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## BY STEPHEN KIM 🗘 PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MACHAQUIERO

hese days, those who have completely given up on life drive minivans. For those who have completely given up on life but still want to feel cool, there are SUVs. Sure, hauling lots of people and cargo both safely and securely is serious business, but today's tools flat-out suck compared to the tools of decades past. Unlike anything on the road today, David Henriksen's 1972 Dodge Monaco wagon can haul nine passengers up 10,000-foot mountain peaks, traverse unforgiving off-road trails, hit 150 mph on the highway, and cruise 600 miles between fill-ups despite packing 493 ci of



big-block Mopar under the hood. It's been getting the job done for 270,000 miles, too. Unless you can get Scotty to beam you up to your favorite travel destination, this beastly wagon hauls people and cargo better than any device known to man.

Not long after Chrysler invented the minivan segment in the mid-'80s, the public decided that they didn't like wagons anymore. It marked a sad day in automotive history for hot rodders, as the wagon's demise meant that hauling kids and cargo with any semblance of dignity or excitement was merely a distant memory. While hot rodders are often ridiculed for thinking everything from back in the day was better, they have a legitimate argument when it comes to the wagon. Since many were based on their mid and fullsize muscle car counterparts, dad could order up a wagon with a big-block, manual trans, and





## **MEGA HAULER**



The one-off hoodscoop is the handiwork of Scott Smith at Harms Auto.
After creating a mockup of the scoop, metal workers in Peru fabricated the final product.

a heavy-duty rearend while mom patted him on the back for buying a sensible family car.

Recognizing the virtues of these machines when they were still available to the public, David locked in on the perfect people mover in 1977. "I worked at a Dodge dealership in 1972, and I always liked the looks of the Monaco wagon. With a sticker price of over \$7,500, it was actually the most expensive car that Dodge produced at the time," David recalls. "In 1977, my wife and I needed a family car, so I picked up a '72 Monaco wagon for \$1,300. When people bought wagons back then, they used them for a purpose, so it had already been used very hard over 70,000 miles. It had dings and dents, the woodgrain was bleached out, and there was a bulge in the floorboard I had to jump on to flatten it back out."

Addressing the cosmetics would have to wait for some other day, as fortifying the Monaco for high-elevation duty was the top priority. "It gets so hot here in Phoenix that we used to drive up to the mountains each summer to escape the heat. We loaded up the wagon and dragged a tent trailer behind it five times each summer over the course of 10 years," David recollects. While the big 440 had no problem pulling the kids and cargo through the thin 10,000-foot air, the rough roads eventually took a toll on the chassis. "The unpaved mountain roads were very hard on the car, and created lots of fatigue cracks on the frame, so I was always working on the car. The sway bar mounts ripped a hole in the frame, so I had to reinforce it. The rear shocks kept hitting big rocks, so I raised them up higher and relocate them to behind the rearend housing. To keep the suspension from bottoming out, I added two additional leaves on each rear spring and installed larger-diameter torsion bars up front."

Once the odometer hit 170,000 miles, David swapped in another 440 big-block out of a '72 Chrysler New Yorker, which eventually logged 50,000 miles in the wagon. Since gas stations weren't always easy to find while cruising through the wilderness, David came up with a clever solution. "After



After logging tens of thousands of miles on a 440 pulled out of a New Yorker, David stroked the original numbers-matching 440 to 493 ci and dropped it back in the wagon. The air cleaner inhales fresh air from a functional custom hoodscoop, while a huge four-row radiator fights off the desert heat.



Originally a vinyl seat car, the interior was reupholstered in a fabric that mimics the pattern of the original vinyl. Using the sheetmetal off the roof of a '70 Duster, David fabricated a custom box for the CB radio and the Pioneer head unit.







New car manufacturers still brag about rear A/C today, but David says Chrysler installed it on its cars as early as the 1950s. Cool kids are happy kids.







we set up camp, the kids liked sitting on top of the roof as we cruised around hunting roads the next day. Driving back into town just to get gas was a hassle, so I built an additional 33-gallon fuel tank," David explains. "I had to slightly modify the floorboard, but from inside the car you can't really tell that anything's been changed. The two tanks hold 56 gallons total, so even at 11.5 miles per gallon the range is over 600 miles."

After a decade-plus of service, the Monaco's exterior had seen better days. In 1990, David embarked upon a full restoration. To get the ball rolling, he yanked the drivetrain and stripped the wagon down to the bare frame. Next, he applied a fresh coat of paint, and freshened up the interior by replacing the original vinyl upholstery with cloth. Since the car had been maintained meticulously over the years, the only mechanical work needed at the time was a transmission rebuild. Once back in action. the Monaco shuttled the Henriksens back and forth to the mountains a few more times. Shortly thereafter, the wagon's role transitioned into a long-distance cruiser. "The kids were all grown up, so my wife and I started traveling all over the country going to car shows, sightseeing, and shopping," David says. "This car has taken us to the Mopar Fest in Canada, Disneyland, Yellowstone, Mount Rushmore, Niagara Falls, Oregon, and Maine, It's been to 40 states and logged over 270,000 miles."

Naturally, as the wagon transitioned from an all-terrain beast to a long-distance cruiser, David continued to adapt it for its new environment. For more relaxed freeway cruising, he installed a Gear Vendors overdrive unit onto the TorqueFlite 727 trans. Unlike in the past, when David swapped back and forth between 3.23:1 and 2.76:1 ring-and-pinion sets depending on the wagon's intended use, the Gear Vendors unit allows sticking with 3.73:1 gears inside the Chrysler 8.75-inch rearend in every situation.

Anyone who logs over a quarter of a million miles with a big-block has an obvious fondness for cubic inches, so David took



To prevent the suspension from bottoming out during the wagon's many off-road excursions, David added two extra leaves to each rear spring and swapped out the .980-inch torsion bars for beefier 1.06-inch units. Raising the rear shocks and repositioning them behind the rear axle helped cut down significantly on impacts with big rocks.

on the opportunity to make the wagon's 440 even bigger. After boring the block to 4.350 inches, he fitted it with an Eagle 4.150-inch crank, Carrillo steel rods, and JE 9.24:1 pistons. Ported factory iron cylinder heads inhale through an Edelbrock Performer RPM intake manifold and an Edelbrock 750cfm carb. A Crane 214/222at-.050 hydraulic roller camshaft actuates the valves, and exhaust exits through a set of TTI headers and dual 3-inch pipes. Although the exact horsepower output is unknown, the big 493 puts out more than enough grunt to smoke BMWs at will. "I was driving down the freeway one day when a guy in a BMW flashed his lights at me. Once he pulled up beside me, I dropped it down a few gears, hit the gas, and pulled a quarter-mile ahead of him by the time I hit 150 mph," David says with a chuckle.

Needless to say, after nearly 40 years and over 200,000 miles together, the intertwined lives of the Henriksens and the Monaco wagon are virtually inseparable. "This car is a pleasure to drive at any speed. The dual A/C system keeps you cool while the seats are like a big sofa with armrests," says David. "The performance is amazing and the acceleration is endless. I will continue to add things to the car as

## **FAST FACT**

**1972 DODGE MONACO WAGON** CAR OWNER: David Henriksen • Phoenix, AZ

### **ENGINE**

TYPE: Chrysler 493ci big-block

**BLOCK:** factory 440 block bored to 4.350 inches

OILING: Melling oil pump, stock pan

**ROTATING ASSEMBLY:** Eagle 4.150-inch steel crank, Carrillo rods, JE 9.24:1 pistons

CYLINDER HEADS: ported factory iron castings

CAMSHAFT: Crane 214/222-at-.050 hydraulic roller; .488/.508-inch lift; 112-degree LSA

**VALVETRAIN:** COMP Cams roller rockers and timing set

INDUCTION: Edelbrock Performer RPM intake manifold and 750cfm carb

**IGNITION:** stock

**EXHAUST:** TTI headers and dual 3-inch mufflers

**COOLING SYSTEM:** custom four-row radiator and 20-inch mechanical fan

## DRIVETRAIN

**TRANSMISSION:** TorqueFlite 727 transmissions with 2,600-stall converter; Gear Vendors overdrive unit

REAR AXLE: Chrysler 8.75-inch rearend with 31-spline axles, 3.73:1 gears, and limited-slip differential

### CHASSIS

FRONT SUSPENSION: heavy-duty 1.06-inch torsion bars, shortened strut rods, custom swaybar

**REAR SUSPENSION:** heavy-duty leaf springs, custom sway bar and air shocks

BRAKES: stock 11-inch discs, front and rear

## **WHEELS & TIRES**

WHEELS: 17x8 American Racing Torq-Thrust II, front and rear

TIRES: 235/65ZR17 Michelin, front and rear

I feel the need for them, and enjoy driving and showing this fine Mopar as we grow old together."

While there are still some wagons running around today—mainly Eurotrash—and even Dodge briefly got back into the game in recent years with the Magnum, consumers still mysteriously clamor for minivans and SUVs. While attempting to understand the public's poor taste in people movers is pointless, the overwhelming scarcity of wagons makes David's Monaco even more unique. Whether the terrain is rugged or smooth, steep or flat, there's simply no better way to haul people and cargo while hauling some serious ass.



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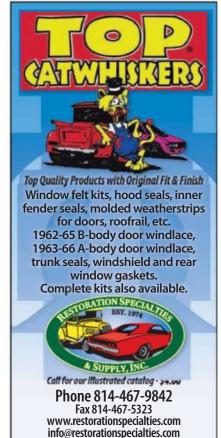




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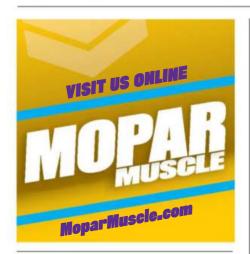
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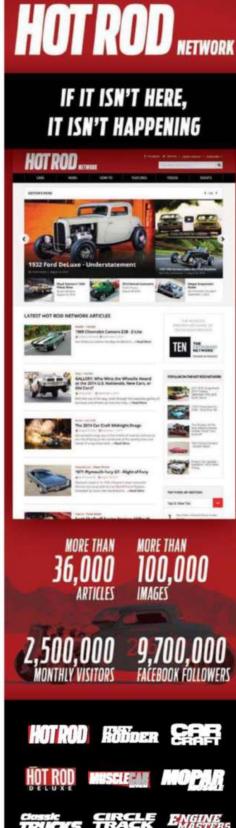




















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## PERFORMANCE CLINIC

STEVE DULCICH, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

## **WIDE TRACK**

I have a 1968 Barracuda that was originally a drum brake car equipped with factory 10-inch drum brakes all around. I have stepped up from the original 318 to a stroker 360, now putting out about 475 hp and 500 lb-ft of torque. I beefed the drivetrain with a 727 trans, a new driveshaft, and a 3.55 Sure Grip equipped 8 3/4 rear with Moser axles.

At the time of the rearend work, I went to the wider B- and E-Body–style rear brakes. I did this because parts are more common for this braking system, and I was changing the axleshafts anyway. I ordered the axleshafts with the offset to match the wider rear drums, with the bigger 5-on-4.5-inch bolt pattern. That all worked out pretty good.

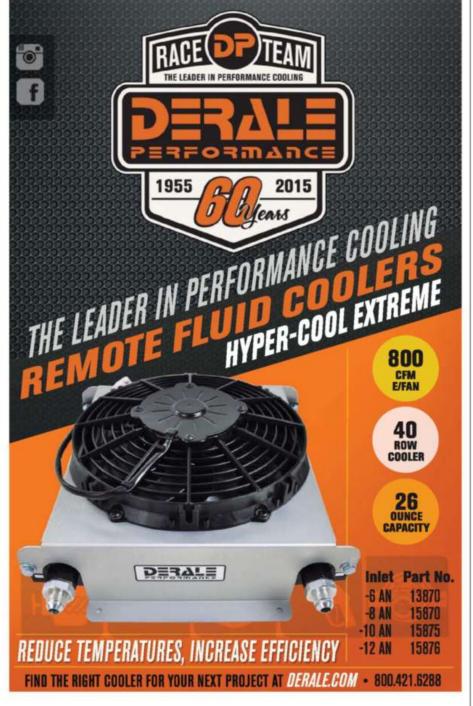
At the front, I was looking to change to

the big bolt pattern and thought I got lucky with finding a complete 1975 Dart with the big bolt-pattern discs. I pulled the whole setup off the Dodge, including the upper A-arms, spindles, calipers, brackets, brakes—the whole works. Even though I had the junkyard parts, I got new rotors, calipers, pads, bearings, upper and lower ball joints, and the upper control arm bushings. I had read somewhere that the factory big bolt-pattern discs are wider than both the factory drum brakes and the factory small bolt-pattern discs. This proved to be correct. I got a set of new wheels and tires for the car, Cragar Eliminators in 15x7 for the front and 15x8 for the rear. I found the rears fit perfectly, but at the front I ran into a problem. The wheels put the 225/60R15 tires right into the front fenders.

From trying different tires and wheels I had laying around, it looks like I need to use a wheel with much less dish, almost like a modern car with a lot of backspacing. The other choice was to run skinny tires in front, but I want to have some rubber on the road. I like the vintage look of a mag with some depth to the design, and that is why I selected these wheels to begin with. What is the work-around here?

### MATT SPENCER

Matt, the only real work-around you have is to sell the braking and suspension components you built for the front and go a different direction. The late-model A-Body big boltpattern disc arrangement was basically an adaptation of B- and E-Body parts. This included the spindles and ball joints, which were just physically bigger than the earlier A-Body small bolt-pattern parts. The overall effect was to widen the front track by about an inch and a half. That was no problem with narrow factory 14-inch wheels and narrow tires, but it will be an issue when putting larger tires and mags in the front. You can get your disc brakes and big bolt pattern without the dramatic increase in track width by going with an aftermarket brake kit using the original drum brake spindles and ball joints. Wilwood's Dynalite 11-inch brake package will accomplish this.



### **PISTONS AND RINGS**

I have a 440 that is due for a rebuild. The engine lives in my 1979 Aspen. My dad did this swap many years ago, and it is one radical ride. The motor was pretty tired when I got it and needs to be gone through. I have a machine shop that I work with and my dad was advising me to get the number 2355 Six-Pack pistons. He says these are the good 10.5:1 compression forged pistons. He has been building and working on Mopars since the 1970s.

My machine shop is telling me to use another piston that has 1.5mm metric rings. I was not sure about that and asked my dad about it, and he doesn't like anything metric. He said those thin rings won't work in a Chrysler, and that the 440 needs a heavier ring to not burn oil. He said the compression will blow right past those rings unless I rebuild the engine every year and use it for drag racing only. I want to run my car on the street, since that was what it was built for. The problem is what do I tell my machinist, or do I take the engine somewhere else?

### **CORY OWENS**

Cory, I'll have to side with the machinist on this one. While the pistons recommended by your father were the hot setup 30 years ago, technology has moved on. Those pistons were a forged replacement for the factory cast-aluminum Six-Pack pistons, and they used an OEM 5/64-. 5/64-. 3/16inch ring package. While this arrangement worked, the pistons were relatively heavy and the rings had very high tension, resulting in high friction and power-robbing drag. This increases the heat load on the engine, and it also increases wear and costs power. Better materials and improved machining and manufacturing precision have made today's narrower rings a practicality for any engine. By taking advantage of the newer technology, your 440 will be better.

### **BRAKES PULL**

I just bought a 1970 Challenger as my first muscle car. The car is not restored, but it has been built as a dependable driver. It has a 383 engine that was rebuilt to stock, headers, dual exhaust, an automatic transmission with floor shift, and an 8 3/4 factory rear. The



car has disc brakes in the front, and it has drums in back. The problem I am having is the car wants to run into the ditch when I hit the brakes hard. It pulls to the right, and I have to steer left to keep it on the road.

I thought the brakes were shot, so I put on new calipers, rotors, and pads. It still did the same thing when that was done. I figured something might be clogged up in the piping, so I got a brake line and hose kit and replaced all of the lines and the master cylinder. Still, the car pulls. My buddy tells me the car might have a bent frame. Any ideas on where to go next? I really like my Challenger, but with this brake problem the car just isn't safe to take on the road.

### **BRIAN MONROE**

Brian, since you have pretty much changed everything in the braking system, I would suspect that the problem is somewhere else. What is most likely happening is that the front, or even the rear, suspension is shifting when you apply the brakes. The braking forces are transferred through the suspension when the brakes are applied, and under hard braking, the suspension or some of its components can deflect, causing the car to want to change direction.

The strut rods and strut rod bushings are the most likely components to come into play here, as these parts locate the lower control arm, and transfer most of the braking force at the front suspension. If the strut rods are bent or the bushings here are wiped, the sudden alignment change under braking force can certainly make the car a handful. Other worn suspension and/or steering parts can have a similar effect, as can the rear suspension bushings. The best course of action here is to thoroughly inspect all of the wear components in the suspension and replace what's worn out. If the entire suspension looks like it hasn't been serviced in years, your best bet is to start fresh with a full rebuild. front and rear.

## **IS IT FAKE?**

I want your opinion on a car that I bought as a project several years ago. I wanted a Mopar project when I saw that Mopars were getting hot on the market. I am more of a Chevy guy, but I did my homework on Mopars before

stepping in to buy this particular car. I knew of a guy in another county who had quite a few old Mopars on his property, and made a move to buy one. The car was a 1970 Challenger 440 Six Pack with an automatic. I know this is a rare piece of iron, and brings good money, so I was prepared to pay up. This car was in a shed, and the motor and trans were gone. It had the scooped hood, aftermarket slot mags, and the 8 3/4 rear, so that all checked out. The VIN was a "V-Code," and that meant the Six Pack engine. It had the bucket seat interior and Slapper shifter. The car was red, and it looked like it was repainted at some time. It had hoodpins, and the side stripe that said R/T.

I paid good money for the car, but we wrote the bill of sale for a lot less to save the transfer cost and tax. I paid cash and hauled it off. I let the car set for years, and then last spring I pulled it into the shop to start working on it. Now for my questions. I looked into more of the features of these cars and found the K-member was not the one for the Six Pack car. It should have had a skidplate on the bottom. Did all of these cars come with that extra plate? Also, there should be extra body reinforcements at the rear spring mounts and up front that are not there. Again, did all the cars get them?

Next, the fender tag was on the car, and it matches the VIN on the dash. I could not find any other numbers on the car, and I looked. When I bought the car. I knew E87 meant Six Pack, but I didn't know all of the other codes. I looked that over with an online decoder, and my tag says the car should be green on green, but it is red with a black interior. I know that could have been changed over the years. The hood seems like it was green at one time, but I could not find any green on the rest of the car. The car has A/C in the firewall, but the dash is plain without any vents. The dash is in great shape with no cracks at all.

I guess there is a chance I got taken on this car, but I don't have any real solid proof. I did run the numbers and the car did not come up stolen and didn't show up on file at all. The guy I bought it from is now dead, and I guess there is no way to know the real story on what the history of

this car is. I guess all of these things could have been changed over the last 40 years, so who knows what's what. I visit some Mopar sites online with a lot of collectors and experts, but I am not going to go there with my questions. I would rather keep my identity private and not give any photos of the car until I get this figured out, and have finished rebuilding it. I am going to just build it to the codes I see on the fender tag to make it correct.

I am not too worried about the engine being missing, since 1970 440s are easy to find and you can get the Six Pack parts new. I have bought a block with no numbers on the pan, and I guess this is called the warranty block. What part of the VIN was stamped here? Also, where is a good source for the non-A/C underdash vents?

Another thing I am wondering is if the paint codes were sometimes in error. The car was obviously red except for the hood, but the tag says green. I think the red would look better and make the car worth more on the market. Could red be the actual correct color for this car? Should I get a reproduction fender tag made with that color code instead of the green?

### **ANONYMOUS**

Well, I think we all know what is going on here, or this letter is an attempt at pulling our chain, so here goes. It's pretty clear that the car you are working on did not come from the factory with the "V-code" tags that are on it now. Passing it off as such will defraud the next buyers in the chain of ownership. Keep in mind that if some day another green Six Pack Challenger with the same VIN turns up, dead or alive, you will certainly have some explaining to do.

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